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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Education for children a priority for rice farmer**

**Suva, Fiji Islands.**

Securing a good education for his children has always been a top priority for forty-nine year old rice farmer Yaad Ram of Dreketi Labasa.

While he was not able to continue his studies, he made sure that his children were not deprived of any opportunity.

Mr Ram was at the Fiji National University's Pasifika Campus with his daughter Sushmita Devi to attend her orientation into the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme earlier this week.

Sushmita, who was excited to be on campus said she was looking forward to the start of a new journey.

She was passionate of pursuing Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme, however, she could not get a place in the programme last year due to her Year 13 marks which required her take up foundation studies.

"I enrolled into full foundation programme and upon completion was able to get the GPA required for the programme," she said.

Sushmita said she was happy to fulfill the dreams of her dad who has always supported her.

"I am going to work hard and get good grades in all units," she said.

Meanwhile, Ram took the floor to share his experience with hundreds of students present at the Pasifika Campus auditorium and said he was happy that his daughter was accepted into the MBBS programme.

"I have studied until Form Five and I was a very good student but wasn't able to continue studies due to the death of my brother," he said.

Ram said he learnt farming skills from his father and worked hard on the farm.

Hard work and dedication won him Best Rice Farmer in Dreketi in 2005.

He was then selected to go to Indonesia to learn rice farming techniques in 2007.

Ram told the students present that upon his return he used the techniques learnt on his farm and produced 28 tonnes of rice which won him Best Rice Farmer in Fiji award in 2008.

He said hard work and dedication was the key to success in any field.

“I have always encouraged and supported my children and want them to achieve the best in life,” he said.

His years of hard work is coming to fruition with his eldest son working as an Accountant, his second child pursuing MBBS in another University, third in her first year of MBBS at Fiji National University and youngest daughter, a form four student at Dreketi High School.

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**About the Fiji National University:** The Fiji National University (FNU) was established through the merger of 7 government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji, and commenced operations from 1 January 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 30,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last six years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities & Education (CHE), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).